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A
LETTER
TO
THE PEOPLE
OF
ENGLAND,

ON THEIR
PRESENT SITUATION.

BY A
A DOWNRIGHT ENGLISHMAN.

THE SECOND EDITION.

EGHAM:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY C. BOULT.

AND SOLD BY RIVINGTONS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON,
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OF ENGLAND

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PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, BY C. BENTLEY,

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WINDMILL

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LETTER

TO THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

Friends and Fellow Countrymen,

KNOWING that ye are in general a good-tempered people, and will not refuse to hear the sober advice of one who really wishes to give you counsel that now seems necessary to your welfare, I without fear of a rude reception readily address myself to you, on the appearance at present among us of a desire to disturb the peace, and oppose the established Government of our country.

A considerable degree of uneasiness, and even turbulence has before appeared in this nation, at times when, either we have been engaged in an unsuccessful war; or measures disagreeable to the generality of the people have been carried on at home. But neither of these is at present the case; the last expensive and disgraceful war was not the measure of the present Ministers; but on the other hand supported by many of those who now strongly oppose Government, while our ill success in it was (if they be not greatly belied) in no small part owing to the treacherous correspondence of some, who were then, and are now loud in declaring themselves the Champions of the People. From the distressed state in which we were left by that war the exertions of Mr. PITT have raised us to a situation, which has made the nations round about wonder at the change, and call us the most extraordinary people that ever existed. Instead of any thing unpopular having been lately done, we have not only actually been eased of part of our taxes, and that especially in one point very material to the poor, the tax of three shillings on every house of less than seven windows; but means are now putting in execution for paying off the National Debt, the cause of two thirds of our taxes: and if we will but keep the evil-minded and disorderly from raising disturbances among ourselves; and the wickedness of our neighbours do not force us into a war for our preservation, we shall every year now be relieved from some part of our burthens. What is there then to occasion the present restlessness and seeming disposition to tumults and riots? What is there that

should in reason lead you to throw yourselves into that state into which every man has in points less important sometimes been brought by the folly or ill advice of some pretended friend, when he says, "What a fool was I, to be led into this absurd behaviour, which instead of proving to my advantage, turns out greatly to my hurt?" There is no motive to this if ye consider, but the suggestions and advice of some ill-designing men, partly of desperate fortunes and partly of inflamed passions, who hold out to you doctrines contrary to truth, religion, and even common honesty, and totally destructive of your own comfort and happiness,

As I trust there are but very few among you so ignorant as not to know that there is a God who will judge the world righteously; and a Heaven and a Hell into which men will hereafter be sent, according to their behaviour here: and I think still fewer so desperately wicked as in defiance of all God's threatening to Unbelievers to mock at his laws and his judgments; I hope ye will at once set your faces against all who try to persuade you to follow the example of your old enemies, the French: a people who have always been striving either slyly by deep-laid schemes or openly by war to ruin this country; and who have lately shewn themselves to be not only in their Court and Nobility, but throughout the nation; an unfeeling, unprincipled, and cruel race, beyond even what they were thought and despised for in this country. They have openly renounced all Christianity, they have broken the oaths which they swore of their own accord over and over again: and neither the tenderness of the female sex, the innocence of childhood, the weakness of old age, nor the respect due to those who would die, rather than be guilty of treachery, have stopped them from slaughtering any they chose to put to death: Nay, after murdering them, they have actually drunk the blood of those they slew. Are these then men whose politics ye would wish to copy; or, whose conduct ye could bear to imitate? No; I trust I shall ever have reason to think at least better things than these of every Englishman.

But as ye are not incorrigibly wicked, so neither are ye wretchedly foolish; yet this last ye must be, were ye to suffer yourselves to be misled by that man, whose false and seditious writings have lately been so industriously dispersed among you; I mean, PAIN, whose real story ye probably never heard, but which it is right ye should know, that ye may think of him as he deserves. This PAIN then, I am sorry for my country's sake to say, was born at Thetford in Norfolk, and brought up to the business of his father, who was a Stay-maker, but his son TOM not being of a disposition to earn his living by honest industry, moved from his native place into Kent, where having married

married a woman to whom he behaved exceedingly ill, and been guilty of some rascally conduct not unlike swindling, he left that part of the kingdom, and obtained an Exciseman's place, out of which he was turned for some evil practices, but by dint of interest with one of the Commissioners got appointed again in spite of his character. Whether he was turned out a second time, or not, I do not recollect; but should hardly think he would of his own accord resign. However, to America he afterwards went, and there assisted in raising the Rebellion against this country, to which we owe so large a part of our present taxes. Here he was taken into the service of one of the provinces, but turned out again for some dishonest conduct. When the war was over, he went to France, and it has been confidently said, that at the beginning of the present disturbances, he there offered to write in favour of the French King; but his assistance not being thought worth the price he asked for it, he came over into England, and turning to the other side, has ever since been labouring to raise rebellions against Kings. Such is the history of this man publicly given in print, with the addition of other infamous particulars of him, and never as I yet heard, contradicted. Now, my Countrymen, let me seriously ask you, is this a man ye would take for your adviser either in your public or in your private conduct? Was such a man to give even good advice, ye would, on discovering his real character, naturally and justly suspect, that he had some evil design hidden under his pretended concern for your happiness: But ye can no longer hesitate to believe this, if ye consider how perfectly contrary to all the laws of religion is that behaviour to which he would lead you. The duty which Religion commands towards our neighbour is, ye know, to love him as ourselves, and to do unto all men, as we would they should do unto us. Can he then be truly your friend, who would teach you by breaking this law to throw yourselves into misery during this life, and the next too? Ask your own hearts therefore, whether if ye were in the place of your Governours, ye should like that those under your authority should speak evil of you, mock at your dignity, and disobey your commands? If ye would not in such a case like this, ye certainly cannot do so yourselves now and yet fulfil your duty towards your neighbour. Perhaps the only persons subject to you are your children. Now are ye not hurt when these disobey or despise you? Can yourselves then do the same to those who are set over you, and yet do as ye would be done by? And, if this be impossible, are not those who endeavour to make you contemn your Governours and behave disrespectfully, much more disobediently towards them, misleading you to break one of the great laws of religion?

From the obligations which Religion lays on you however,
though

though much the most important with which we have to do, these men strive to withdraw your attention, by filling your minds with a persuasion that ye are wronged and oppressed---to effect this they have told you a great deal about the Rights of Man, and the happiness flowing from liberty and equality. That ye may not be deceived by their misrepresentations, let me beg you to attend to what I will now lay before you, and ye will easily see how truly ye enjoy all these rights which can really be enjoyed, and partake of liberty as far as ye can consistently with your own security and comfort; and ye will perceive too, that the equality which they talk of as a blessing, is a thing absurd and impossible in itself; while all attempts to introduce it, can produce nothing but misery, as long as they are continued.

Now without any round-about discourse used only to confuse your understandings, the real Rights which every man may justly and naturally claim are those of safety in his person and security in his property; these contain every demand he has either on particular persons, or on society at large. But as there are in the world some men who are unjust and wicked, and will injure and steal the property of their neighbours, to render us secure in our persons and property, it is necessary to have governments to restrain such people, and do justice to those who are attacked by them. Yet these governments, though thus plainly necessary to support the real Rights of Men, cannot be maintained without expence: And who ought in justice to pay this expence, but those who enjoy the benefit of them? And these are the inhabitants of the countries. Here then ye see that taxes, and the obligation on us to pay them, do indeed arise from those very rights which have lately been so wickedly misrepresented to you. But further, it comes to pass that when countries by the industry of their inhabitants grow rich, they have not only to guard against thieves and robbers among themselves; but the jealousy and avarice of neighbouring nations being raised by their prosperity, there spring from hence foreign wars, which occasion expences that call for additional taxes: Yet were not these wars supported, one nation must often fall under the dominion of another, and so pay a tribute to foreigners more than equal to the sum by which they might have supported their own freedom. And such must have been our own case, had not both we and our ancestors exerted ourselves as we have, and agreed to bear those taxes which we do: For otherwise, our ever restless and ambitious neighbours would long ago have over-run this country, and made Great-Britain nothing but an island of slaves to the French Monarchy.

These times, however, these crafty deceivers who use every method to impose on you, would persuade you are now over; since the French are enlightened, and resolved no more to enter
into

Into wars. But as I am convinced that ye are no fools, I think ye will judge more from the actions of the French than from their words, which ye have never been used to find true; nor will ye trust more to the declarations of their advocates. Behold your old disturbers then, under these professions of peaceableness and forbearance absolutely ravaging the countries on three sides of their own land; and they have already seized the ports by which our manufactures used to be sent into Flanders and Germany. Such worthy friends are they to us; and so well disposed to live at peace with their neighbours! And so false too is the notion which a Member of their National Convention has endeavoured to infuse to you, that we could exist in safety, without a government, an army, and fleet; which must it is true, necessarily be a constant and a large expence; but the benefits arising from which more than doubly counterbalance all we pay for their support---while in raising the sums necessary to the maintenance of these, no human government was ever more equitable than ours; for ye are too sensible to expect perfection in any work of man. Neither our Nobility or Clergy are freed, as they were in France from the common burthens; but the greater taxes, such as the Land and Window Taxes, are levied in proportion to the difference of property. If one man has an acre more than another, for that acre he pays so much more: And the Tax on Windows increases more than in a common proportion to the number of them, since he who has twenty in his house pays for each of them, more than he who has ten does for each of his. To relieve the poor after this manner in all the taxes is impossible, because it would give so great opportunity of defrauding the government: No distinction for instance, can be made between the malt that is to be sold, either as malt or in beer to the poor, and that for the use of the rich; yet as the last consume much the greater quantity in their houses, they pay much the most to the Public Treasury: While further, if ye are oppressed in the mode of gathering any tax, ye have always a power of appealing for redress; neither are ye forced, as the people of some nations are, to use any commodity that is taxed, whether ye like it or not. And this naturally leads to the question, What these seditious writers mean by hinting, that the inhabitants of this country have not perfect liberty? For every man among us is free to do every thing but mischief; and who will complain of not having the liberty to do that, but those who love mischief, and these are only rogues. No one can in this country be restrained in his actions, but by the sentence of the law; and if there was not sufficient power in that to restrain the wicked, none of us could sleep securely in our houses, for the villains that would range about uncontrouled---full liberty of speech, ye know, we have; and as to liberty of writing, these
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wretched falsifiers do themselves prove by their own publications the truth of that which they have the impudence to deny.

Suffer not yourselves then, to be made discontented with your most enviable situation, possessing peace, liberty, and security, by the mere sound of words: Bring their assertions to the proof, and ye will soon perceive, that they are trying to deceive you, by confounding the situation of the French under their late absolute monarchy, when they had neither the liberty of the press, nor freedom of speech, nor that of action, with our State under a free government, where we enjoy all of those.

But there is yet another trap which they set for you; the doctrines of equality, of which it may justly be said, that was any man to declare, that all former generations had been mistaken in their manner of walking, because the natural way of walking is not on our feet but on our heads, he would not say any thing more absurd than those do, who advise you to look for happiness in bringing all ranks to the same level. Ye know, that when two men are in the same situation, and some place offers, by having which, either of them would be bettered, they immediately both strive to get it, and so become rivals, and generally enemies to each other. Now if all men were brought down to the same level, what at present only happens between two or three at a time, would be the case between all, that is, every man would still, as he now is; be trying to better himself; but all being then of the same rank, the same things would be aimed at by all, and consequently every man's hand would be against every man; and what would be the confusion, the quarrels and the bloodshed that would follow in such a case? Why, they would be more horrid than those which lately passed at Paris. At present, by men being divided into different ranks, each rank has its separate pursuit, and all are at the same time connected together, because each is necessary to the support of the other's, and plainly contributes to their benefit. Had we not among us any people of the higher ranks, who have large fortunes to spend, none of those costly articles of furniture and dress, in making which so many thousands are employed, would be wanted. If no man had more cloaths than are absolutely necessary to cover him, or no more furniture to use than to prevent distress in his house, nine out of ten, nay, still more of the manufacturers of such places as Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield, must be turned adrift without any employment to support themselves and their families, and if there were no towns like these, the demand for corn, hay, and the like, would be so lessened, that the farmers would not be able to get a market for the produce of their lands, and consequently could not afford to employ so many men, whence

whence carters, ploughmen, and labourers must be turned out of bread.—So wise is the scheme of making all men equal.

But not to leave any chance of misleading you untried, these deceivers can suggest, “that if all men were made equal all the land would be equally divided, and then every man would have his share.” Now this is a very old story, partly tried near two thousand years ago in Italy; but it never produced any thing but strife and wretchedness, and at last an arbitrary government. That ye may be able to judge for yourselves however; Let us suppose, that all the land of this kingdom were equally divided, the share of every particular person could be but a very few acres. Now let us further consider the case of a poor man, setting off with a few acres of land; before he can make any use of them, he must have instruments of husbandry, cattle, and stock; to raise money for buying which he must part with some of his land, for in such an unsettled state as this change in property would make, there would be none to lend money, and the moment one man had sold part of his land, he who bought it would necessarily have more than the other, and so this fine fancied State of Equality must be from the very nature of things destroyed immediately; and as some would be more saving, or more ingenious, or more diligent than others, things must soon get back into their old course, and the whole change serve only to produce a vast deal of misery in making it, and to prove that when man strives to alter what God has constituted, his presumptuous endeavours can turn only to his own reproach and punishment.

Having thus shewn you the falsehood and absurdity of those maxims which these enemies of your peace and happiness wish to impress on your minds; let me further call your thoughts to the effects of those disturbances which they wish to raise among us, under the notion of your gaining either what ye in truth already have, or something which instead of being desirable can only make all of us miserable. Consider then, if by the evil suggestions of these instruments of Satan, tumults should be raised, and the regular government of the country interrupted, will the evil consequences fall only on the rich? By no mean. For ye do not want to be told, that there are many people who are now very unwilling to pay their poor rates, and whom nothing but the power of government forces to do it: Was therefore this power lessened, all such persons would withhold their share, and much the greater part of those who now willingly contribute to the support of the poor, would in such a state of things be disabled from paying even the least towards it; since the first consequences of any great commotion among ourselves would be a decrease in the value of property in general, a scarcity of money, and a great lessening of the worth, if not an entire destruction of the public

funds; by which thousands of those, who are now in opulence, would be reduced to poverty: And if the collection of the poor rates was thus rendered impossible, think, what must become of all the old, lame, sick, and the helpless infants; who are in our present peaceful situation, and under our well ordered government, maintained by them. But still further, I can assure you on the part of the people of property of this kingdom, that they are by no mean disposed to suffer themselves to be plundered, without trying to repulse those who attack them, or even dying with arms in their hands; should once the French Emiffaries, and British (for they are by no mean all English) incendiaries proceed so far as to raise a mob, the Nobility, Gentry, Yeomanry, including Farmers, Tradesmen, and even Labourers, who have five or six pounds worth of goods to lose, will join together, and prove to those who would wish to rob them, that they must bear a great many hard blows before they will succeed, so that ere that change of property can take place, which these detestable promoters of robbery and carnage hold out, thousands and tens of thousands must be slain, and what will then become of the wives and children of those poor men who will fall in such a wicked and needless contest---Work-houses for their reception, there will then be none, and those to whom the poor do so constantly apply for relief, and from whom they do very liberally receive it, the Rich and the Great, will be no more in a state to give their widows and orphans assistance; and if we carry our supposition to the most extravagant length, were I mean these Frenchified spreaders of sedition to succeed so far in raising tumults among us, as to overthrow our happy Constitution, and cause a total change of property; one of the most probable consequences of having all the lands ravaged, and all the large stocks destroyed, and all the great farming capitals of the country ruined, at the same time that such multitudes must be taken from works of husbandry to support the civil wars, which must be carried on before this could come to pass, and no small portion of them be killed, or rendered unable to labour for the rest of their days; one of the first consequences I say of all this would be a Famine. So that in truth, if ye suffer these most ill-designing and reprobate wretches to mislead you into sedition and rebellion, it will be at least two to one against every poor man, that instead of leading (as we all now do) a life of security, and rising in the morning to follow without danger his daily labour, and in the evening returning home to enjoy, in quiet with his family, his honest earnings, he will either be knocked on the head in battle, or die of hunger in a ditch.

It is yours therefore on this true state of the case being set before you by a real well-wisher to the poor, to determine, whether in compliance with the suggestions of men who are blinded by the
father

father of lies, the Devil, you will forfeit your comfort in this life, and your salvation in the next, by engaging with them against your lawful Sovereign; or will, by opposing stedfastly all their attempts to delude you from your duty, and patiently passing your days in peaceable and honest industry, give yourselves the inexpressible comfort, when ye come to lie down on your death beds, of thinking that ye have behaved innocently in life, and are going to appear before your Judge, without having your consciences loaded with the guilt of having assisted in disturbing the tranquillity of your country, ruining the peace of your families, and plundering the property and shedding the blood of your neighbours. And let me exhort you most earnestly, as Englishmen, who have not yet forfeited your character for good sense and humanity; as men who are willing to give others their rights, as well as to maintain your own; and as Christians who wish to obey the commands of your Maker, and who stand in awe of His judgements, to decide at once for the right conduct, and with contempt and just indignation reject all the persuasions of those who would make you unworthy of these your proper characters: and I trust, that I am more likely to succeed in persuading you to maintain them, than PAIN and his associates are to prevail on you, to change them for those of Atheists, Brutes, or Frenchmen; nor will I doubt, but that ye will sincerely unite with me in praying, that God will mercifully vouchsafe to preserve to us our religion and our laws; or fear, that ye will hesitate, heartily to join me, in crying out—**THE KING AND THE CONSTITUTION—TRUE LIBERTY—A SETTLED GOVERNMENT,—and OLD ENGLAND FOR EVER!**

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